

February 24, 2009

**Testimony on behalf of Committee Bill No. 360,  
An Act Concerning Employment of Individuals  
with Autism**

**James Frishman  
Stonington, CT**

**I am here today to speak in favor of Committee Bill 360, An Act Concerning Employment of Individuals with Autism. I was diagnosed at age 5 and have received services from the state to the present at age 28. The services I received made it possible to learn ways to compensate for my disability. Computers provided with software specific to my needs made it possible for me to reach my potential. I could type with ease by third grade and hit 65 words per minute by the end of elementary school.**

**Transition planning by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and extensive testing provided me with the information as to what skills and which vocations would "play to my strengths and particular interests." The state provided services for all of this.**

**My determination and persistence coupled with appropriate services resulted in my Cum Laude graduation from Connecticut College and receiving my masters degree from the University of Rhode Island. I was hopeful that the end result would be employment in my field or at the very least employment using my skills.**

**Instead, after many interview and countless applications, I was not able to obtain a job that uses the skills I was trained for. At times I met with prejudice and told not to say I had Asperger's Syndrome. I found it difficult to hide certain characteristics of my disability such as tonal quality of my speech during interviews.**

**I applied for and passed the Connecticut State Librarian's exam and I also passed the Library Technical Assistant's exam as well. One library technical assistant's interview lasted two hours. I received no feedback from the interview so I am not sure what I needed to do differently.**

**I can cook, a little, balance a checkbook and need no assistance to live independently; however, I live with my parents because I cannot afford to live on my own. After so many years of services from the state, I would appreciate the opportunity to give back. This bill would help make this happen.**